

## Policy/Program Memorandum No. 120

**Date of Issue:** May 16, 2011

**Effective:** Until revoked or modified

**Subject:** REPORTING VIOLENT INCIDENTS TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

**Application:** Directors of Education

Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

Principals of Elementary Schools

Principals of Secondary Schools

Principals of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

**References:** This memorandum replaces Policy/Program Memorandum No. 120, June 1, 1994, and revokes the document Violence-Free Schools Policy, 1994.

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction to school boards<sup>1</sup> on the development of procedures for reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education. Boards are required to have these procedures in place by September 1, 2011.

Research shows that violence in schools can affect the social, psychological, and physical well-being of students, as well as the learning process. Students who experience violence in school are more likely to report feelings of social isolation, depression, and frustration, and to demonstrate decreased engagement in school.<sup>2</sup> Research also shows that it is important to monitor the occurrence of violent incidents in order to obtain accurate data on which to base policies and planning.<sup>3</sup>

### REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARDS

#### Reporting of Violent Incidents

Boards are required to report the total number of violent incidents on an annual basis to the Ministry of Education through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS). All violent incidents that occur on school premises during school-run programs must be reported to the ministry, whether the violent incident was committed by a student of the school or whether it was committed by any other person.

For the purposes of this memorandum, the term violent incident is defined as the occurrence of any one of the following or the occurrence of a combination of any of the following:<sup>4</sup>

- possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
- physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention
- sexual assault
- robbery
- using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- extortion
- hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences

Boards must follow the direction in Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol, 2011 regarding notification of the police if any of the above violent incidents occurs.<sup>5</sup>

In circumstances where board employees have reason to believe that a student may be in need of protection, they are required to call a children's aid society, in accordance with the requirements of the Child and Family Services Act.<sup>6</sup>

#### Ongoing Monitoring by Boards

Boards are also required to collect and analyse data on the nature of violent incidents to support the development of board policies and to inform board and school improvement plans.

1. In this memorandum, school board(s) and board(s) refer to district school boards and school authorities.

2. Sarah Lindstrom Johnson, "Improving the School Environment to Reduce School Violence: A Review of the Literature", *Journal of School Health* 79 no. 10 (2009), pp. 451-465.

3. Rami Benbenishty, Ron Avi Astor, and Anat Zeira, "Monitoring School Violence: Linking National-, District-, and School-Level Data Over Time", *Journal of School Violence* 2 no. 2 (2003), pp. 29-50.

4. This list is taken from Ministry of Education, Ontario, Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol, 2011, p. 8. Various terms used in the list are defined in the Glossary of the protocol document.

5. Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol, 2011, p. 8.

6. See Ministry of Education, Ontario, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 9, "Reporting of Children in Need of Protection", August 10, 2001.

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